



*A community rich with opportunity, sharing and growth.*

September 28, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As we prepare for the upcoming flu season and the possibility of an outbreak of the H1N1 virus (none to date), we want to make you aware of some of the preventative, monitoring/reporting and communication procedures we have in place:

### **Preventative Measures**

- We have assembled an internal Flu Epidemic Task Force to deal with the many dimensions of this threat.
- A consultant with expertise in the area of preparing for and responding to a pandemic flu event has been retained.
- Our nursing team has instructed direct care staff about flu symptoms and hygiene measures that will reduce the risk of transmission. They have done this during daily rounds, through email transmissions and staff in-services.
- Infection control procedures are posted in all the homes and common areas of all our facilities, hand sanitizing dispensers have been installed in all communal areas and sanitizing gels have been distributed to every staff office.
- Staff will be required to stay home if experiencing any flu-like symptoms. Supervisors have been instructed to send home any employees exhibiting flu-like symptoms.
- We are strongly encouraging all staff, residents and day program participants to follow CDC guidelines and get a seasonal flu and H1N1 vaccine when available.

### **Monitoring/Reporting Systems**

- We are constantly monitoring the bulletins regularly issued by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and State Department of Public Health regulations and guidelines that may be applicable to us. A link to the CDC flu update page is prominently displayed on our employee intranet site.

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- We will be in contact with the Pembroke and Hanson Board of Health as necessary.
- An internal reporting procedure has been put in place to track any confirmed or suspected cases of the flu in any of our programs.

### **Communications**

Three primary modes of communication will be utilized during flu season:

1. **www.newenglandvillage.org** – Please refer to our Web site for H1N1 updates and reported cases of flu in our Village community. A link to this information appears on the home page of our site.
2. **Broadcast email** – will be used if there is a need to efficiently disseminate timely information related to how we're managing, if challenged with a high incidence of flu this season.
3. **Phone** – will be used to relay time sensitive and personal information. In the **event of a campus-wide emergency**, we will utilize the Plymouth County Sheriff's Department Emergency Alert System for broadcasting emergency messages via voice to the primary phone number we have on record for you.

One measure of an organization's strength is its ability to respond well in an emergency situation. If a significant number of Village staff, residents or day program participants becomes infected with the H1N1 virus, New England Village will evaluate the specific circumstances and decide how best to respond, keeping in mind that we have many years of experience dealing with the flu. After assessing our staffing options, including our relief staff pool, we feel confident that we can function with reduced staffing if necessary during a severe outbreak. The currently vacant House 1 has been prepared for use as a quarantine unit should we need to move sick residents there to further contain transmission.

My hope is that everyone will remain healthy and safe, and I want to assure you that I will continue to monitor this situation with that goal in mind.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bryan Efron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bryan" and the last name "Efron" clearly distinguishable.

Bryan Efron, Ph.D.  
Executive Director